2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

437 431 5. They set no fixed value on their various properties, and rarely make or procure anything with the express object of disposing of it in barter. Apparently they prefer to regard their transactions as presentations, for their mode of negociating is to *give* such objects as are desired by another in the hope of receiving in return something for which they have expressed a wish, it being tacitly understood that, unless otherwise mentioned beforehand, no "present" is to be accepted without an equivalent being rendered.

[578] 6. The natural consequence of this system is that most of the quarrels which so frequently occur among them originate in failure on the part of the recipient in making such a return as had been confidently expected.[1]

7. All iron-pointed weapons, tools, or shell ornaments are eagerly accepted by the *ēremtága-* in exchange for such things as are more easily procured by them than by the *áryóto-*:[2] for instance, an adze would generally be considered worth two ordinary bows, or a bundle of wooden-pointed arrows; or a man might undertake to make a canoe or bucket for one who would give him an adze.

428 ● 422 8. But little care is taken of the utensils, weapons, canoes, &c., in daily use, and consequently new ones are often required, the old, when no longer serviceable, being thrown aside; as all their possessions consist of goods which need to be more or less frequently replaced, it is hardly necessary to explain that there is no accumulation of the labours of former generations; hence also it arises that they are not tied by any laws of inheritance: more as a matter of sentiment than for any other reason, the nearest of kin takes possession of all the effects left by a deceased person, and as often as not they are distributed ere long among such friends as may be in need of any of the articles in question.

422 9. The weapons, tools, and other property pertaining to one member of a family are regarded as available for the use of his or her relatives, but such articles as a cooking-pot, canoe, or sounding-board, when not required by the owner, are looked upon somewhat in the light of public property by members of the same community; in short, the rights of private property are only so far recognised that no one would without permission appropriate or remove to a distance anything belonging to a friend or neighbour.

000 **Agriculture.**—1. Before the arrival of strangers in their midst,

[1] *Vide post* "Games and Amusements," paragraph 37.

[2] Further mention of this will be made at "Games and Amusements," paragraph 24. As will there be explained, the occasions on which they usually barter are when they meet for a *jeg-* at some permanent encampment.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 - AZ2 Andamans AZ2

I examined a number of canoes drawn up on the beach. They varied in size from some eight to ten metres long, built to carry twenty people, to small single-manned craft three to four metres long, and there were some very small ones clearly intended to encourage the children to set out on their own. The very large canoes are, however, rare. The beam also varied considerably from some barely wide enough to admit a man's knees to others of one and a half metres or more.[1]

In the shallows, contrary to some assertions, paddles are never used; the booms would make alternate paddling extremely difficult. Reversed harpoon shafts are instead used as punt poles and oars, usually made of *Myristica longifolia*, are used only in deep water. They are sometimes but not always lashed into the holes in the gunwale through which the booms pass. They are short, not more than 1·3 metres long and are always rowed forwards (obviously there would be a danger of stubbing a reef if the European style of rowing was used). Like the canoes, the oars vary somewhat in size. Very roughly made they consist of a handle ninety centimetres long and a forty-centimetre blade. The grip tapers almost to a point and increases gradually in diameter towards the blade, which is long, narrow, blunt-ended and flat-convex in section. Usually it is merely roughly shaped with the Onges' crude hatchet, but occasionally it is smoothed off with a sharp *Cypraea* shell. The helmsman and pilot stand on the two platforms, guiding the canoe with oars. As far as possible the rowers avoid the side bearing the outrigger mechanism; any deviation of course caused by the unilateral rowing is corrected by the two steersmen.

When they first launch a canoe the Onges decorate it with ochre designs like those on their bodies and the hollowed logs used to hold honey, although they are washed off as soon as the craft enters the water. As usual the men do all the work up to that point and the women do the painting. The initial painting is the only form of ornament on the canoes; there is not even a mark of ownership, although each canoe is curiously enough recognized as the property of one man, despite the fact that everyone has helped to

[1] I am unable to agree with Brown that the Onge canoes are extremely small, that they have bow and stern, and that their floats are inefficient. My own experiences of travelling in the canoes has led me to the opinion that on these and other points Brown was wrong, possibly partly because he never actually visited Little Andaman.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

build it (when I wanted to acquire two for the new anthropological museum at Port Blair and the Indian Museum in Calcutta I had to bargain with the men recognized as the owners, although the price had to be distributed among all the members of the group).

The chief delight of the men on their fishing trips is the capture of a Giant Turtle. I have already described (p. 88) the spear harpoons which the Onges use to catch them. Once caught, the wretched animals are subjected to a form of vivisection utterly incomprehensible to the Western mind; they are literally cut up alive and the pieces thrown into the boiling cooking-pot. Nor have I ever witnessed anything so terrible as the way in which the Onges, in the absence of any suitable cooking vessel, or the materials for an earth oven, roast these turtles whole and alive over a slow fire. They seem totally unable to realize that animals can feel pain and laugh like children at the other atrocious tortures they unwittingly inflict not only on the turtles, but on every living thing that falls into their hands.

These marine turtles (as far as I was able to see there were no land turtles in the Andamans) yield a far greater amount of food than the dugong, and provide the islanders with both meat and eggs. Two species are common in the seas round the islands, *Chelonia virgata*, or the green turtle, and *Caretta imbricata*, which supplies the shells normally sold commercially. The Onges prefer the former, which are both meaty and more plentiful.

Turtle-hunting and egg-collecting is done by the menfolk. The method is very like that used for dugong and large fish, using the harpoon. Owing to their fear of the spirits abroad in the night, the Onges never go near the beaches between dusk and dawn, when it would be easy to take the turtles on land and immobilize them by turning them on their backs. They do know this trick, however, and use it when captured turtles (often weighing up to a hundredweight) are too heavy to carry in the canoe; the animals are turned on their backs and dumped on the beach ready to pick up later.

The Onges harpoon the turtles from canoes, preferably at night when the turtles are nearing the shore, which they never approach in the day time. When there is a moon the creatures are easily seen, and on dark nights the phosphorescence of the sea helps.